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BACTERIAL BLIGHT OF GERBERA DAISY

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Gerbera or Transvaal daisy, Gerbera jamesonii Bolas, is native to Africa. The newer diploid and triploid varieties produce plants with large leaves and beautiful long-lasting flowers. This has led to increased use of gerberas as cut flowers, border, and bedding plants (1).

The bacterium, Pseudomonas cichorii (Swingle) Stapp, was recently found causing a severe leaf spot and limiting gerbera production in a Florida nursery (1). Disease severity was greatly increased by use of overhead irrigation which aided in spread of P. cichorii from infected to healthy leaf tissue.

SYMPTOMS. The leaf spots were variable in size, circular to irregularly shaped, and were brownish black in color. Often, concentric rings formed within the lesions (fig. 1). Occasionally, large brown areas extended from the leaf margins and narrowed as they reached the midvein (1).

CONTROL. Control procedures based on research have not yet been determined for this disease. Suggested cultural practices, however, consist of roguing diseased leaves or plants, and employing watering methods that keep leaves as dry as possible. In general, the use of protective sprays, such as streptomycin (Agri-strep, Agrimycin 17, etc.) at 100-200 ppm active ingredient or a combination of Kocide 101 (1 ½ lb/100 gal) + Dithane M-45 (1 ½ lb/100 gal) have given control of bacterial diseases on other hosts. Before initiating large scale spray programs with either of these chemicals, several trial sprays should be run on a small group of plants to check for possible phytotoxicity.

Fig. 1. Pseudomonas cichorii on gerbera daisy showing brown leaf spots with concentric ring formation.

Literature Cited

1. Miller, J. W., and J. F. Knauss. 1973. Bacterial blight of Gerbera jamesonii Incited by Pseudomonas cichorii Plant Dis. Reptr. 57:504-505.

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